

**Notes of the public meeting held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 7.30pm  
Regarding planning application 14/20653/FUL  
for 3 wind turbines at Knightley Hall Farm**

The meeting was attended by approximately 60 people including 10 members of the Parish Council as well as Clerk, Jayne Cooper, SCC Cllr Mark Winnington, SBC Cllr Ken Williamson, Sir Bill Cash MP and Staffordshire Newsletter

Apologies received from: Cllr K Abbott, Cllr M Deegan, Cllr G Payne, Cllr K Ingram, Cllr M Smith and Paul Boston

The views of the parishioners who attended and spoke are detailed within these notes.

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The Chairman, Cllr Greatrex welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that this application and a large amount of supporting documentation had been received earlier in month. Some of the supporting documentations had been put on display for parishioners to see.

Neighbouring consultation letters had been sent to 189 properties on 22<sup>nd</sup> July with a response date of 12<sup>th</sup> August. Parishioners were encouraged to write to SBC by 12<sup>th</sup> August and were reminded to send separate letters for each member of the household. The Parish Council had been granted an extension of time to respond no later than 15<sup>th</sup> September and would hold a full Council meeting to consider the application.

The Chairman made it clear to parishioners that an application of this size, that carries such technical detail, is obviously beyond the depth of knowledge of parish councillors therefore technical questions would be taken from parishioners and be passed on to the relevant authorities. The applicant, REG Windpower and the Case Office had been asked to attend but both were unavailable.

The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk had attended a meeting with Norbury Park Estate and representatives of Norbury Parish Council. The purpose of the meeting was that representatives of all parties affected would meet and share information. Norbury Estate had appointed Roger Parry & Partners who are based in Shrewsbury to advise the estate and to help shape an objection. Norbury Estate had made it clear that their advice would be shared with parish councils.

Norbury Park will make a significant financial commitment to this as they recommend the involvement of landscape consultants and heritage consultants to challenge the reports submitted by REG. Their initial view is that these are the two areas where a challenge is most likely to be successful so their involvement will be key to a successful objection. Reports from Parry & Partners are expected in 2 – 3 weeks time. Should Gnosall PC object (following a council meeting to be held in September), Parry & Partners may agree to deliver the objection speech to the Borough Council's Planning Committee. As this is a "major application" this would be a special meeting and additional time would be allowed for the objection speech (10 minutes) and for each of the Borough Councillors (15 minutes).

GPC had also liaised with Natural England and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to seek their views.

**Members of the public and councillors were then asked to raise any questions or comments:**

- Mr Booth said there were a number of technical points within the report that he had concerns with and had already passed this information to the Parish Council. He strongly objects to the application. He read out a quote from The Guardian (December 2013) regarding millions of pounds going to land owners for wind power and how the poor will suffer.
- Sir Bill Cash said he is deeply opposed to all wind turbines on every conceivable footing and so far all wind turbine applications in Staffordshire that he has opposed had not been approved. He said wind turbines are flawed on economic grounds; they serve no useful purpose and are detrimental to the landscape. Huge profits are gained only by the rich but much worse is the effect on landscape. He would oppose this application from the beginning to the end.
- Jerry Ford asked for clarification on the financial benefit to the parish and whether this is to be believed. The Chairman explained that there would be a Community Fund of £30,000 per annum (possibly shared with neighbouring parishes) for 25 years or the life of the turbines therefore the total could be £750,000.
- David Toon, Chairman of Forton Parish Council said the turbines would have a negative visual impact on parishioners, the proposed location is the wrong place. As Chairman of Forton PC he was very concerned that the SBC had not contacted his Parish Council about the application and he had visited many properties to inform parishioners and advised them to respond.
- Norman Hailes a resident at Hollies Common confirmed he had received a notification letter from SBC but had concerns about the short amount of time to respond bearing in mind the size of the application. SBC Cllr Ken Williamson explained how the Government set deadlines that authorities must adhere to.
- Sir Bill Cash offered to supply information to the Parish Council with headings that cover the main criteria to make it a little easier for people to object.
- Mr Hailes asked whether the MOD had been contacted. The Chairman said SBC Cllr Mike Smith had done so the previous week and both Gnosall and Norbury PC's would be doing the same. The Chairman reminded parishioners that an application for a wind turbine at Walton Grange Farm, a much smaller wind turbine, had been refused because of an objection from the MOD.
- SCC Cllr Mark Winnington advised everyone not to get too concerned about technical information and focus on the effect the turbines would have on the landscape and heritage for example he referred to Aqualate Mere, one of the oldest Mere's and the effect the turbines would have on tourism.
- Mrs Toon raised concerns that the Case Officer is based in Salford with no local knowledge. The Chairman responded, he said as far as he was aware SBC did not have an officer with the sufficient experience to deal with this type of application. SBC Cllr Ken Williamson added local opinion and knowledge comes from Borough and Parish Councillors who will be able to speak at the Planning Committee Meeting. He advised parishioners not to apply to speak and leave it to the Parish Council to speak on behalf of the parish. He reiterated the comments made by Cllr Mark

Winnington and suggested people concentrate on how the turbines would have a detrimental impact on landscape and heritage sites that are within 2km of the site.

- Mrs Gregory agreed that the visual impact is extremely important but there are other concerns to take into consideration such as health. She added that some people may think the financial gain of £30K is good for the parish but other parishes would want a share so it needs to be set against the economy and we must be prepared for this.
- Mr Prendergast said that Shawbury would be most concerned with the effect the turbines would have on the radar and not low flying aircraft
- John Braithwaite, Norbury Park Farm Manager asked Bill Cash whether David Cameron objects to wind farms. Mr Cash said there is a mixed policy mainly because of the Coalition Government.
- Mr Mockett said he is opposed to wind farms because of impact on health. He said the Government and Renewable Energy firms are in denial and there should be a bigger cry on the impact on the wellbeing and health of people. He listed a number of illnesses connected to living close to turbines. He added £30K per annum is an insult. Turbines in a visual range of properties result in the value of properties being reduced. Public footpaths and bridle ways should also be considered as these would be affected.
- Andrea Evans, Chair of Norbury Parish Council asked where the turbines would be connected to the National Grid. The Chairman responded saying the pipes would go underground, along Grange Road in Knightley, Riley Lane to the High Offley sub station.
- Mr Stevenson said the location is the same land as the polytunnels which have a negative visual impact but concerns were ignored by planners – the same could happen again. Cllr Williamson said this is different and advised people again to focus on landscaping and heritage.
- Mr Dale queried what financial gain the landowner would receive if the parish would receive £30K
- Mrs Booth said the MOD is a statutory consultee and if SBC did not consult the MOD that is a serious matter. She said it would be useful to know the number of dwellings within a 2km radius of the site.
- Mrs Spencer asked whether the information Mr Cash would send to the Parish Council could be added to the council's website. The Chairman agreed to this. She also said consideration must be given to Loynton Moss a nature reserve near to the proposed location.
- Mrs Toon said the 30 residential homes for seasonable workers that are on the same site as the proposed wind farm would be affected.
- Bill Cash suggested that an "Amenity Society" is formed to work and support the Parish Council ie a Residents Group.
- Mr Mobley said he is new to the village, a resident on Hollies Common for only 12 weeks. He is committed to politics to reduce fossil fuel usage and said FENRATS was a group that was successful in arguing against development but had costs

amounting to £51K. He said people in this parish need to do something active but this could have a cost.

- The Chairman reminded everyone that Norbury Park with consultants would be preparing a case for objection and would be sharing this information at no cost to the parish.
- Both Cllr Winnington and Cllr Williamson again encouraged people to write as soon as possible and concentrate on the detrimental effect on landscape and heritage and to also attend the planning committee meeting (when it is set) so committee members get a true feel of the views of parishioners. The planning committee members would read a summary of the letters and the number of letters received would show the strength of feeling therefore it is important to write with objections.
- Mrs Gregoroy informed everyone about GRID. Bill Cash said this is the type of group that people should join and work with parish councils and Norbury Park to fight the case.
- There was a question whether SBC's Local Plan encourages renewable energy. Cllr Williamson said it does as long as there is no damage to the countryside in relation to the Countryside Act.
- Cllr Alker suggested West Midlands Ambulance, Seighford Gliding Club and companies who operate hot air balloon rides are consulted as all could be affected.
- Mr Booth said if Norbury Park's consultant costs will be in the region of £20K and FENRAT campaign group costs were £51K should there be a need for public donations? Mr Braithwaite advised leaving Norbury Park to continue on its own for the time being.
- Mrs Bowers asked about the effect on Nut Wood, an ancient wood on Hollies Common as this was mentioned during the consultation where felling/thinning was being considered. The Chairman said the documentation says work on Nut Wood would be put on hold until the application is approved. Mrs Bowers said the land owner has a tree thinning licence and expressed her concern about this ancient wood.
- D Shorthouse said woods and trees in Dukes Covert had already been felled – Bill Cash asked for this information.
- Mr Hailes said STAG had to raise £40K so £20K being put forward by Norbury Estate may not be enough to fight this application.

There were no further questions so the meeting was closed.